



Common Core State Standards & Iowa Fact Sheet



Iowa Department of Education

What is a standard?

Every parent has expectations of what his or her child should or should not do. We expect them to look both ways before crossing the street or to not throw sand at the playground.

What about the classroom? What do we expect them to learn in school?

This is exactly what a standard is—an expectation of what a student should know and be able to do.

Standards provide a roadmap for teachers, parents, and students.

Standards:

- Do not tell teachers *how* to teach.
- Lay out the knowledge and skills students should have so that teachers can build the best lessons and environments for their classrooms.
- Help students and parents by setting clear and realistic goals for success.

Standards are a first step—a key building block—in providing our young people with a high-quality education. To truly be effective, they must be accompanied by quality instruction and authentic assessments.

Does Iowa have standards?

Yes. Iowa has had standards since 2007 in reading, math, and science. The standards are in place to, in part, meet No Child Left Behind requirements.

Iowa also has the Iowa Core.

Signed into law in 2008, Iowa Core makes our roadmap more robust. The Iowa Core adds detail to the state's standards by specifically identifying essential skills and concepts for kindergarten through 12th grade students in literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21st century skills.

The Iowa Core was originally called a curriculum, but is not a set of courses or specific classroom materials like a traditional curriculum. It identifies the skills Iowa students must have and the concepts they must know in the areas listed above. In addition, it provides guidance and support for teaching and learning in Iowa classrooms. All Iowa school districts and accredited nonpublic schools are required to implement the Iowa Core by 2014-2015.

What are the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards Initiative was a voluntary state-led effort to develop a common set of standards for what students in our nation should know and be able to do.

The standards cover the areas of English language arts and mathematics for grades K-12.

Parents, teachers, school administrators, and experts from across the country, together with state leaders through their membership in the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), led the effort to develop the standards. The federal government was not involved in the development of the standards.

They were released by CCSSO and the NGA Center on June 2, 2010.

The standards are:

- Aligned with expectations for college and career success;
- Built upon strengths and lessons of current state standards and standards of top performing nations;
- Informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- Evidence- and research-based.

For more information on the Common Core State Standards, please visit <http://www.corestandards.org>.

What was Iowa's role in the initiative?

Iowa was an early supporter of the idea to develop a set of voluntary common standards across the states.

A total of 48 states, including Iowa, signed a memorandum of understanding to participate in the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

In May 2009, then-Iowa Department of Education Director Judy Jeffrey wrote a letter stating that both she and Governor Chet Culver supported the work to provide a set of common core standards.

In the letter, Jeffrey stated, "This is not about one state competing with another, but a nation that must compete with the world."

During the winter of 2010, writers of the Common Core State Standards came to Iowa to review our work on the Iowa Core and to gather input on initial drafts of the Common Core.

The Iowa Department of Education staff reviewed the Common Core State Standards to see how they compare to the Iowa Core, which Iowa schools are currently working on implementing. See article at left for more information on the Iowa Core. See the next page for more information on Iowa's alignment study.

On July 29, 2010, the State Board of Education unanimously adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics as part of the Iowa Core.

What does this mean for Iowa?

The State Board of Education voted 6-0 on July 29, 2010, to adopt the Common Core State Standards as part of the Iowa Core. With this vote, the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics replace the literacy and mathematics sections of the Iowa Core.

The Common Core State Standards does not replace our state mandated content standards for No Child Left Behind accountability, but becomes part of the Iowa Core, which all schools must implement by 2014.

With the adoption of the Common Core State Standards, the state will now revise the English language arts and mathematics sections of the Iowa Core. A final version of these sections will include all of the Common Core standards, plus additional identified skills and concepts.

States are allowed to include up to 15 percent additional items to the Common Core State Standards. Iowa is looking to make these additions to enhance the already strong alignment with the Iowa Core. These additions will be identified and brought to the State Board of Education in September for review and approval.

After this point, districts will have one set of expectations they can work from to begin the alignment process to their local curriculum. The Iowa Department of Education recommends school districts and nonpublic schools wait to begin the alignment process until after September, when the final version of the English language arts and mathematics sections of the Iowa Core will be complete.

The alignment study results show a high level of similarity between the Iowa Core and the Common Core State Standards.

Common Core State Standards and Iowa Core: How they compare.

The Iowa Department of Education conducted a formal alignment study—or comparison—for both literacy and mathematics in July and the department presented its findings at the board's July 29 meeting.

The alignment process was developed by Achieve, an independent, bipartisan, non-profit education reform organization based in Washington, D.C., to examine the alignment of the Iowa Core with the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics.

The panels that conducted the study consisted of representatives from the department, Iowa's area education agencies (AEAs), local districts, state education organizations, and independent consultants.

The alignment study results showed a *high level of similarity between the Iowa Core to the Common Core State Standards*.

Specifically, the study shows that 88 percent of the skills and concepts addressed in the Iowa Core for mathematics are also covered in the Common Core State Standards. For example, both the Common Core State Standards and the Iowa Core state that high school students must learn concepts of statistics.

In literacy or English language arts, 84 percent of the skills and concepts addressed in the Iowa Core are also covered in the Common Core State Standards. For example, both the Common Core and the Iowa Core address the use of reading strategies—or ways to approach reading that help students comprehend text.

What the alignment study means is the work Iowa school districts are currently doing to implement the Iowa Core will not change significantly with the adoption of the Common Core.

How they compare: Common Core State Standards and Iowa Core

Literacy/English Language Arts—Elementary

Common Core Standard: "With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text."

Iowa Core: "Use comprehension strategies: Ask and answer questions."

Mathematics—High School

Common Core Standard: "Use the rules of probability to compute probabilities of compound events in a uniform probability model."

Iowa Core: "Understand and apply the basic ideas of probability."

The Differences

While the examples above show the similarities that exist between the Iowa Core and the Common Core State Standards in literacy and mathematics, there are some differences. One example is the Iowa Core's use of grade spans versus standards by individual grade level. In short, Iowa uses grade spans to help address individual student learning and progress. In addition, the Iowa Core includes writing on demand, such as on-the-spot writing sample for a job interview or essay questions on a test. The Common Core does not include this skill.

Frequently asked questions about the Common Core and Iowa Core.

Why do we need the Common Core State Standards and the Iowa Core?

We need the Common Core State Standards and the Iowa Core to ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. They will help ensure that students are receiving a high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state. The Common Core State Standards will provide a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices within and across states that will improve our ability to best serve the needs of students.

What does it mean to adopt the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics?

Adoption means that Iowa has taken formal action to make the Common Core State Standards part of the Iowa Core. This will provide a roadmap for school districts to build their local curriculum.

Will Iowa have additional expectations beyond those that are in the Common Core State Standards?

Yes. The Iowa Core covers more areas than the Common Core State Standards. The Common Core State Standards only address English language arts and mathematics. The Iowa Core covers literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21st century skills.

Does adoption of the Common Core State Standards mean the end of local control in Iowa education?

No. Standards are only one piece to increasing student achievement. Quality instruction, curriculum, professional development, and assessments are all needed. While aligned with the Common Core State Standards, school district curriculum will be developed locally—to best meet the needs of students sitting in the school classroom. Teachers will still have the ability to choose the appropriate textbooks, reading materials, and learning tools that meet the individual needs of their students.

Why is Iowa adopting the Common Core State Standards as part of the Iowa Core?

From the beginning of the Common Core State Standards Initiative, Iowa supported the effort to help our students compete on a national and international basis. Adopting the Common Core State Standards help us in this effort. In addition, by adopting the Common Core State Standards, Iowa can collaborate with other states to leverage resources not otherwise available to the state. For example, Iowa can join with a group or consortium of states to develop meaningful assessments of student learning.

The Iowa Core is the best fit for the inclusion of the Common Core State Standards because the Iowa Core outlines the skills and concepts that all Iowa students must know by the time they graduate. The Iowa Core provides the details Iowa teachers sought to help them meet the expectations set by the state mandated content standards for No Child Left Behind. The Common Core State Standards support and align with this detail.

How will the Common Core State Standards connect to local school curriculum?

Iowa school districts will need to review their own curriculum to determine if it is aligned with the Iowa Core, which now has the Common Core State Standards included.

Can schools begin looking at how their local curriculum aligns with the Iowa Core, which now includes the Common Core State Standards?

The Iowa Department of Education recommends school districts and nonpublic schools wait to begin the alignment process until after September, when the mathematics and English language arts sections of the Iowa Core will be finalized. After this point, districts will have one set of expectations they can work from to begin the alignment process to their local curriculum.

How will the English language arts and mathematics portions of the Iowa Core change as a result of the Common Core State Standards?

The final version will include all of the Common Core standards, plus additional identified skills and concepts that can be added to the Common Core State Standards. States are allowed to add up to 15 percent additional items to the Common Core. Iowa is looking to add to the Common Core to enhance the strong alignment with the Iowa Core. These additions will be identified and brought to the State Board of Education in September for review and approval.

Will the Common Core State Standards keep local teachers from deciding how to teach?

No. Common Core State Standards are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents, and others will decide how the standards are to be met. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans or instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms. Local teachers, principals, superintendents, and school boards will continue to make decisions about curriculum and how their school systems are operated.

**Iowa Department of
Education**

www.iowa.gov/educate

Common Core

www.corestandards.org

Iowa Core

www.corecurriculum.iowa.gov



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The Iowa Core

→ What is it?

The Iowa Core is about helping all students – from pre-Kindergarteners to high school seniors – improve their academic achievement in the classroom. But it is also about helping prepare every student to live, learn, work and succeed in the 21st century

The Iowa Core is an innovative, comprehensive student-based approach to education that supports high expectations for students. It engages them in more relevant learning experiences and helps them attain deeper knowledge through problem-solving and inquiry. With the Iowa Core, instruction focuses on challenging students and providing assessments that provide feedback to tailor instruction and maximize the potential of each and every learner.

The Iowa Core – together with the state core content standards – provides rigorous expectations for all students and gives teachers the tools to change teaching and learning in this state. It also means Iowa will be ready to incorporate national standards because the Iowa Core provides explicit guidance to reach high expectations.

The impact of the Iowa Core goes beyond the classroom. When fully implemented, communities and schools will work more closely together. The Core Curriculum will improve teaching and learning by bringing together educators, parents, and community members to strive toward a common goal of increasing student achievement.

The Iowa Core identifies essential concepts and skills in literacy, math, science, social studies, and 21st century learning skills (civic literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, health literacy, and employability skills) that all Iowa students must know by the time they graduate from high school.

What the Iowa Core *IS NOT*...

- An initiative to make all Iowa schools teach the same lesson plans on the same days, or use the same textbooks.
- An effort to subvert the creative contributions of Iowa's talented teaching professionals.
- A program that will divert money from other education needs.

What the Iowa Core *IS*...

- Helping all students achieve in the areas of literacy, math, science, social studies, global literacy, and 21st century skills.
- Preparing students to live, learn, work and succeed.
- Bringing together schools and communities to increase student achievement.
- Meeting the expectations set by Iowa's rigorous and relevant educational standards.
- Providing strong support to students and teachers as national standards are integrated in Iowa.

To help teachers implement the Iowa Core, the Department of Education and Area Education Agencies are working together to offer assistance to school districts. This assistance is required because implementation of the Iowa Core is not a simple check list; it fundamentally addresses the content taught, the instruction of the content, and types of assessment.

Therefore, the Iowa Core not only describes what students must master, but it helps teachers determine effective instruction through statewide and AEA-level professional development opportunities.

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→ How will this initiative help Iowa students?

The Iowa Core works to ensure that students will have a deep understanding of the essential concepts and skills in the key areas of literacy, math, science, and social studies, as well as in areas civic literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, health literacy, and employability skills that are critical to being prepared for the 21st century.

By focusing on *what* is being taught as well as *how* to teach, the Iowa Core provides high expectations for quality student work. It moves students beyond just knowing content to deeper thinking, understanding, problem solving, and inquiry.

These are the teaching methods that are used in countries that are outpacing the United States.

The Iowa Core enhances student engagement by involving students in interesting, relevant learning experiences that are motivating and lead to positive outcomes. Students will leave school equipped to succeed regardless of their postsecondary plans.

→ How did it come about?

The foundation for the Iowa Core began with Senate File 245 (May 2005) and Senate File 588 (May 2007), which established the voluntary Model Core Curriculum in kindergarten through grade 12 in the areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21st century skills.

In 2008, the legislature proposed that the Model Core Curriculum be fully implemented by all Iowa schools — public and accredited nonpublic. The Governor signed Senate File 2216 into law May 1, 2008, which requires the full implementation in high schools by July 1, 2012 and in kindergarten through eighth (K-8) grade by 2014-2015.

→ Where does this initiative currently stand?

The Department of Education is currently working with all AEAs to support the roll-out of the Iowa Core with local school districts and accredited nonpublic schools. Funds provided by the legislature in 2010 have maintained a network of individuals who provide ongoing support and professional development to schools.

Planning and beginning implementation was the focus of much of the effort during the past year. Implementation plans for grades 9-12 were submitted this past July. The network is currently assisting schools and districts in delivering professional development to teams of teachers aimed at aligning local curriculum content and instruction to the Iowa Core.

In the spring of 2010, the Iowa State Board of Education began studying the Common Core State Standards with an eye toward possible adoption. An alignment study found strong similarities between the Common Core standards and the Iowa Core so in July the State Board adopted the Common Core. These standards, with some carefully selected additions, became the new content of the Iowa Core in literacy and mathematics.



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In the future new assessments will be developed that are aligned with the Iowa Core, providing schools, teachers and parents with better tools to follow the progress of students.

Of the \$1,900,000 allocated by the Iowa General Assembly in support of the Iowa Core, \$1.4 million has been distributed to the AEAs to support 12 full-time equivalent positions and associated expenses for professional development and training. The AEAs are also contributing staff time and resources beyond these funds to accommodate local school needs and development efforts. The remaining \$500,000 is committed to the continued development of the Iowa Core through the development of processes and tools needed to support school implementation as well as the preparation of unique professional development materials.

→ Where can I get more information?

Please visit the Iowa Department of Education website at www.iowa.gov/educate, and click on "Iowa Core" in the left-hand side of the homepage.

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Helping Communities Meet the Learning Needs of All Their Children and Adults

Iowa Core

Summary of purpose, outcomes, content, and implementation

The Iowa Core: School reform in Iowa

The Iowa Core is the platform for school reform. The Iowa Core was put in place to address these critical issues:

- 1) To set high expectations for students and educators,
- 2) To attend to the learning needs of students,
- 3) To break through the achievement plateau, and
- 4) To address global and local challenges

For Students

- Supports students developing **problem solving skills rather than focus on content/skill** learning throughout the K-12 curriculum. These thinking skills are critical to their success in careers, post-secondary education, global society, etc.
- **Raises the bar for content learning:** identifies the critical disciplinary content in literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, 21st Century Skills K-12. The Common Core standards have become the content of literacy and mathematics.
- Because the critical disciplinary learning can be identified throughout the K-12 system, **it does not define learning in Iowa as course-specific nor tied to the Carnegie unit.**

For Teachers and Administrators

- Articulates a vision for **quality instruction through the Characteristics of Effective Instruction:** student-centered classrooms, teaching for learner differences, assessment for learning, rigorous and relevant curriculum, and teaching for understanding.
- Identifies the critical content to deliver in instruction; increases the state's ability to enhance the **alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.**

For area education agencies (AEAs) and the Iowa Department of Education (DE)

- Serves a **"unifier" for the system** – a mechanism for them to expand their capacity to act as a system rather than separate organizations.
- Provides a **central focus for divisions within each: special education, education services, and media services.**

Defined Outcomes

LEADERSHIP
Outcome 1: School leaders build knowledge and capacity to implement the Iowa Core.
COMMUNITY
Outcome 2: Community members and other supporting agencies work together to support the

implementation of the Iowa Core.
SCHOOL
Outcome 3: A continuous improvement process to improve teaching and learning is used at the district and school level.
CONTENT – INSTRUCTION – ASSESSMENT
Outcome 4: District/school leaders and other educators monitor and use data to increase the degree of alignment of what is taught in schools to the Iowa Core.
Outcome 5: Educators engage in professional development focused on implementing characteristics of effective instruction and demonstrate understanding of essential concepts and skills.
Outcome 6: Educators implement effective instructional practices to ensure high levels of learning for each and every student.

Legislative Foundation

- SF 245 – May 2005 – established voluntary model core curriculum for high school.
- SF 588 – May 2007 – expanded content areas and grade levels included.
- SF 2216 – May 2008 – mandated the Iowa Core be fully implemented in all school districts and accredited nonpublic schools. Legislated timeline: high schools by July 1, 2012; K-8 by 2014-15.

Development of the Iowa Core

- Essential concepts and skills: Generated by teams of content experts from Iowa: DE, higher education, AEA, LEA representation after studying national standards, standards from other states and countries that are out-performing Iowa; NAEP frameworks; research and best practice. Reviewed and revised by a Lead Team consisting of representatives of significant stakeholder groups – business, industry, parents, higher education, AEA, DE, educational organizations (ISEA, IASB, SAI); vetted through an online survey. Content areas addressed: literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21st Century Skills (civic literacy, financial literacy, health literacy, technology literacy, and employability skills).
- July 2010: State Board voted to replace the essential concepts and skills in literacy and mathematics with the content of the Common Core after an alignment study indicated over 85 percent alignment. In November, the State Board voted to add some Iowa specific additions identified through the alignment study and collaborative discussions with state literacy and mathematics experts.
- Characteristics of Effective Instruction: developed through responding to teachers who asked “How do we achieve this content with all students?” Content area experts who were supporting research-based instructional professional development in their content areas identified characteristics of instruction critical in supporting all students in achieving high levels of learning. The Characteristics of Effective Instruction are student-centered classrooms, teaching for learner differences, assessment for learning, rigorous and relevant curriculum, and teaching for understanding.

Implementation

- Iowa Core Network: Legislative funded group consisting of teams from each AEA; purpose is to support LEAs in the implementation of the Iowa Core. Efforts have focused on:
 - 2008-09: LEA Leadership. Delivered six modules to district leadership teams. Participants acquired knowledge and skills regarding: 1) the purposes, requirements, rationale, and implication for districts; 2) leadership behaviors to support and sustain the Iowa Core Curriculum; 3) roles and responsibilities of leaders; 4) characteristics of effective instruction; 5) essential concepts and skills and 21st century skills; 6) alignment definitions a processes; and 7) self-study and implementation planning. A total of 262 public school districts participated.
 - 2009-10: Implementation Plan Development: Provide assistance to schools/school districts in developing implementation plans. Of the 377 schools/districts required to submit plans, 354 submitted plans that met compliance. All 377 were brought into compliance by end of October.
 - 2010-11: Alignment, Characteristics of Effective Instruction, Universal Constructs
 - Alignment: Assisting all schools in completing an initial review of the alignment of local curriculum with the Iowa Core.
 - Characteristics of Effective Instruction: Professional development for school-based collaborative teams of teachers to build awareness and shared vision of quality instruction.
 - Online Repository: Professional development supported through online materials. The site is available to all Iowa educators. Site includes:
 - Documents (literature reviews, professional development protocols, discussion guides, organized learning sequences)
 - Online tools (video segments, video tutorials, webcasts)
 - Iowa Core Network Team: The Iowa Core team consists of Department of Education, Area Education Agency, local school, college and university staff who are charged with providing professional development and support to districts as they implement the Iowa Core.
 - Iowa Core funds support 11 full-time, and over 30 partially funded people in AEAs.
 - The Network has delivered over 250 face to face training sessions during the 2010-11 school year.
 - Nearly 100 sessions have been provided through webinars.
 - AEAs also provide in-district support through coaches and consultants.

Long-range Plan

A group consisting of LEA, AEA, DE and professional organization staff has been convened to develop a Long Range Plan for the Iowa Core. This group considered the foundation that has been laid by State Board goals. They focused on identifying goals and work that would once again make Iowa a leader in education for the nation. Four goals were identified:

Goal 1: Unified System

IF the vision and actions of an aligned and coordinated PK-16 system exist throughout the state
IF resources are effectively allocated in the three goal areas to ensure greatest impact on student achievement,

THEN all LEAs and accredited non-public schools will be able to fully implement the Iowa Core with fidelity, and increased student achievement will result.

Goal 2: Goal: Improvement of Instructional Practice

IF educators are surrounded by a professional culture that expects and supports continuous reflection and improvement of practice and IF teaching embeds/incorporates the characteristics of effective instruction,

THEN students will acquire the essential concepts /skills and universal constructs of the Iowa Core.

Goal 3: Competency-based System

IF we define learning progressions and a balanced assessment system (blend of established state tests and T.B.D regional and local performance tasks) that measure the Iowa core (subject area and 21st century skills), and

IF teachers acquire the deep understanding of the content and intent to promote learning of the Iowa Core,

THEN students will focus on attaining the competencies, learning progressions and accompanying criteria that are defined in the balanced assessment system of the essential concepts and skills and constructs embedded in the Iowa Core.

Goal 4: Flexible System

IF we establish multiple opportunities (both on-line, blended, and school-based coursework; within school and outside of school internships, work experience) to engage the passion of students,

THEN students will have increased ownership of when and how they learn leading to greater intrinsic motivation which will result in increased learning.

Iowa Core Curriculum Allocation

These funds allow the Iowa Department of Education and area education agencies the ability to support local districts and schools in fully implementing it. Last year, **\$1,901,556** was spent to support activities related to the Iowa Core. Those activities include the following:

- The Iowa Core Network, comprising teams from each AEA, who meet monthly to collaboratively plan support for school districts to fully implement the Iowa Core by the legislative deadlines. The majority of the appropriation goes to the AEAs; there the funds are used for salaries, travel expenses, and training materials for LEAS (**\$1,426,167**). With no appropriation, this team would cease to exist.
- Development of professional development materials and videos has been funded through this appropriation. An Iowa Core Statewide Resources moodle site has been developed to serve as a repository of resources for all Iowa educators to use in successfully implementing the Iowa Core. Included on the moodle are research briefs and literature reviews, professional development protocols, video segments, discussion guides, and organized learning sequences (**\$125,000**). No further development of training materials would be possible without an appropriation.
- An online database, known as the Iowa Curriculum Alignment Toolkit (I-CAT) was created to help teachers and administrators reflect on what their students have an opportunity to learn

from the Iowa Core over the course of a school year **(\$30,000)**. No further training on the use of the I-CAT or revision of its contents would be possible.

- The Department has established Content Leadership Teams in Mathematics, Literacy, Science, and Social Studies. These teams consist of representatives from each AEA, LEAs including the Urban 8 school districts, and higher education. These teams meet monthly and are planning professional development to support teachers in effectively implementing the Iowa Core essential concepts and skills and the Common Core standards in literacy and mathematics. They will also be expanding Iowa's work in assessment for learning in the content areas **(\$78,000)**. The support of these teams would be curtailed.
- The development of communication for parents and teachers specific to the Iowa Core and to support understanding of the content of the Common Core which has been adopted as the English language arts and mathematics content of the Iowa Core **(\$215,000)**.

